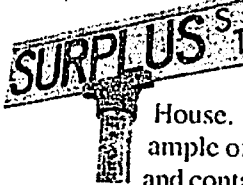


A Journey Down Surplus Street PART X

In the End

By DEBORA BABIN KATZ

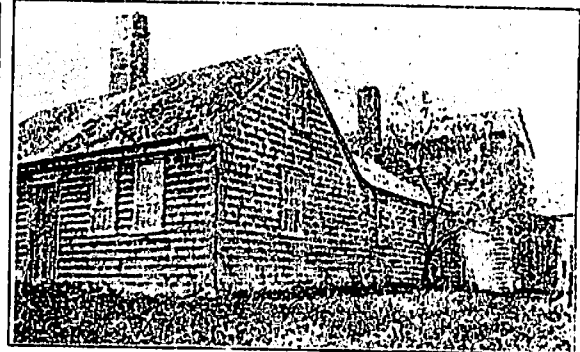
Last week in this series, we visited the Weston houses whose history dates as far back as a land grant in 1696. Now, as we end our journey down



this ancient path, we will visit a unique historical dwelling - The Ebenezer Wormall

House. It is a well-preserved example of early 1700 architecture, and contains the only dining room in town that was once Duxbury's first school-house.

A pathway can be more than just a means to an end. It can lead us to remarkable individuals whose photographs and stories never die, but instead continue to educate us on the importance of ancestral history and preserving our past.



Courtesy of Polly and John Nash

**Ebenezer Wormall
232 Surplus Street**

It seems fitting to end our journey down Surplus Street with a house once owned and occupied by William and Marion Nash. They were strong proponents of land and building preservation. William, or Bill as everyone in town called him, was the president of the Duxbury Rural and

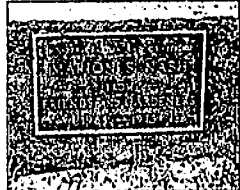
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A Journey Down Surplus Street

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Historical Society (DR&HS) from 1963 through 1965. He "sparked the drive" to purchase the King Caesar House, now a museum house of the DR&HS, while Marion would spear head the new gardens of the King Caesar House, bringing in experts on historic gardening, and then planting with the Garden Committee the appropriate plants and flowers. She would spend endless hours caring for the society's gardens. The Garden Committee placed an engraved stepping stone leading to the King Caesar House's gardens in her memory after her death in 1975. A tree was also planted in front of the King Caesar House to recognize Marion Nash. Its plaque has become embedded in the trunk as the tree continues to grow and honor a woman dedicated to plants and preservation.

Soon after purchasing the Ebenezer Wormald house,



This plaque honoring Marion Nash is found in the steps leading to the King Caesar House's gardens.

Photo By Debora Babin Katz

known then as the Nabby Brewster House, Bill Nash set out on a mission to research their old house and large barn. He would not give up until he had turned every page of town records and uncovered any deed related to the property. "He was so excited when he found in the March 14, 1736 Town Record, the transfer of the town's school house building to Ebenezer Wormald. He ran home, climbed through a small opening, no bigger than a shoe box, in the ceiling of the dining room and began taking measurements," recalled Polly



The Ebenezer Wormald House built in 1736. The middle portion was once Duxbury's first schoolhouse.

Photo By Shelly Rabin



Bill and Marion Nash on Duxbury Beach.

Courtesy of Polly and John Nash

Nash, his daughter-in-law. Not surprising the old school house's measurements, documented as 18 feet long, 15 feet wide and six feet between the joints, matched exactly to the dining room of the Ebenezer Wormald house.

While in the attic Nash took notes on the materials and construction, commenting on the exposed, rough sawed pine planking and lack of nail holes, which would mean the building had been moved in its entirety and attached to the main house, not dismantled. Nash also observed the rafters as being more than six feet apart and some of them "simply tree trunks, rounded in shape from which bark has been removed." He also found a treasure in the western eaves- a hand-made shuttle used in weaving.

When Bill and Marion Nash purchased the house in 1946, Bill was working as the Business Manager of Milton Academy. He had graduated from Harvard in 1913, served in the Navy during World War I, and then worked in the wool manufacturing business until the Great Depression when he lost his job. "Those who lived through it know what a real financial crisis is. Stores closed, people were paid in IOU's, and the banks shut their doors. Nothing like it has happened since," said Nash at age 90 years old during an interview with reporter Nancy McCafferty for the *Duxbury Clipper*. Marion and Bill were very frugal people, they had survived the Depression, noted Polly Nash who described her mother-in-law making her own soap and using every part of a chicken to stretch the meals it could provide.

One day, Marion and Bill Nash received a call from an old friend and realtor, Percy Walker, about the Ebenezer Wormald House. The couple fell in love with the ten-acre property and began their plans to retire there. "It quickly became their pre-retirement project and a campaign to restore it," noted their son John Nash.

They would add a small bedroom on the first floor. In keeping with the antiquity of the house, Bill Nash purchased with a friend an old barn in Marshfield. "It cost me one dollar, of course, dismantling cost much more," he once remarked. Nash had all the

Seeing Surplus Street through Facey's Lenses

By DEBORA BABIN KATZ

In 1956, a contractor working on the restoration of Charlie and Kye Rogerson's historical house on Surplus Street came across some old stuff and quickly recognized its importance. There, in the eaves of the house, was a box filled with glass plate negatives which former owner William Facey had taken during the turn of the last century. This collection, depicting the town and its people, would prove to be one of Duxbury's

most valuable pictorial records.

William Facey came to Duxbury from St. Johns, Newfoundland, in 1884 to work as a telegrapher for the French Atlantic Cable whose office was located on Washington Street, in the former Duxbury Bank built by Ezra Weston II in 1833. The French Atlantic Cable arrived on the shores of Duxbury in 1869, becoming the first line of direct



Mabel Cushing Facey with one of the Facey babies. Photo taken by William Facey c. 1900. Courtesy of DR&HS

submarine communications to the United States. "The cable was pulled back from Abrams Hill and sunk in the bed of the river around Cove Street Beach, then extended in a trench up Cove Street to the old Bank Building," noted Franklin K. Hoyt in his extensive research, the *French Atlantic Cable 1869*. It operated there until after World War II.

Hoyt is quick to point out how the success of the French Atlantic cable from Brest, France to the shores of Duxbury was largely due to "the knowledge gained and the equipment and techniques perfected during the laying of an earlier transatlantic cable between Ireland and Newfoundland." It is not surprising William Facey, son of Samuel Facey and Elizabeth Vye, came from Newfoundland to work as a telegrapher for the French Atlantic Cable. Perhaps his family had worked for the transatlantic cable there, sparking Facey's interest in the business.

He was twenty years old when he arrived in Duxbury, renting at the Benjamin Bosworth House located at 4 Surplus Street on the corner of Washington Street which ran as a boarding house until it became a summer inn called, *The Cottage by the Sea* in the 1890s.

In 1892, William Facey married Mabel Cushing, the daughter of Fannie A. and Joshua A. Cushing. She grew up not far from Surplus Street, at 313 Washington Street, in the family home where seven generations of Cushings had lived. "Her father, Joshua Cushing, was an auctioneer and real estate agent who owned the building at the corner of Water Street and Washington Street where he ran his business," noted researcher Ann Noyes.

Soon after William and Mabel's marriage, the couple moved to 33 Surplus Street where they raised three children, Edwin Thomas born on September 12 1895, Elizabeth Lyon born April 15, 1901, and their youngest son, Kenneth Bradford Facey born on June 29, 1904.

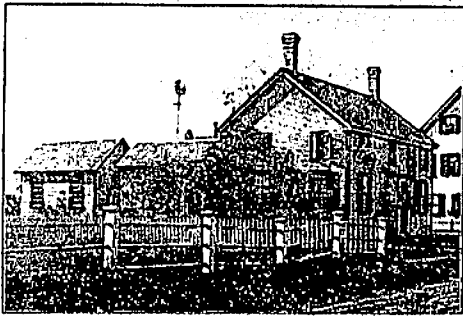
William Facey, known for his story telling and humor, was able to attract people of all ages. "One day my son came home holding a brown paper bag and said, 'Mr. Facey told me to give you these donut holes, Mom.' I opened the bag to find it completely empty to which my son replied laughing. 'There's nothing in it because they were the holes,' recalled Bea Richards, a long time Surplus Street resident.

Mabel Facey also drew the attention of the younger generation from the Surplus and Washington Street area- not through humor but with her baking. "When I was a little girl, I remember my cousin taking me over to Mrs. Facey's, who was always ready to give a kid a cookie," said Noyes.



The Cable House on Washington Street where Facey worked for 45 years.

Photo by Debora Katz



The Facey House at 33 Surplus Street where his glass plate negatives were found. Photo circa 1900.

Courtesy of Kye and Charlie Rogerson

During World War II, the Richards, who lived two houses down from the Facey family on Surplus Street, kept chickens. One hen often flew out of the fenced area and made her way to the Facey's house. William Facey would always return the chicken to their pen. "I'm returning Eleanor," he said to Bea Richards one day. "He had named the hen after Eleanor Roosevelt who was never home at the White House," laughed Richards.

Besides his humorous personality, William Facey will always be remembered as the enthusiastic photographer who left behind a pictorial record of Duxbury, particularly of Surplus Street where he and his family resided for 62 years.

In 1952, he and his wife Mabel moved to Hingham, selling their house on Surplus Street to Charlie and Kye Rogerson. Their son, Kenneth, had died at a young age in 1926. But Edwin and Elizabeth lived long lives; both married and moved from the family house on Surplus Street.

Major restorations took place before the Rogerson's moved in to the house in 1956. The wiring, plumbing and heat systems were all updated. The privy (outhouse) was still attached to the rear of the property, although there was one bathroom in rough condition, inside the house prior to the renovations.

During the work, one of the carpenters told me I needed to go see the stuff in the attic, which was accessible only through a small hole in the guestroom, noted Charlie Rogerson. "There in the attic eaves we found a whole box full of glass negatives," which William Facey had taken, mostly of Surplus Street, Washington Street and South Station," recalled Rogerson.

There were 170 glass plates in all, which Charlie and Kye Rogerson donated to the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society (DR&HS). This society's Library and Archives Committee indexed the entire collection, created an album of photographs from each plate, and stored away the glass plate collection for safe keeping. These photographs have been seen in the DR&HS exhibits, and used in several of their publications. They are without a doubt an invaluable documentation of Duxbury in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

His photographs illustrate both the geography of the town during the time period, as well as, the people of this lovely seaside community. "There are no trees, so you can see a long distance in the pictures," noted Charlie Rogerson. They document the land as having open pastures, and reveal how many of the houses, even ones far down on Surplus Street, had once enjoyed views of the bay.

There are pictures of the Facey family, and of ladies wearing long dresses and fancy hats. There are photos of historical houses, the Yacht Club, Partridge Academy, the Cable house where William Facey worked, the railroad station, stagecoach, the old school house, the Myles Standish Monument, Old Town Hall, the Powder Point Bridge, and town parades. Mostly, there are snapshots of people depicting daily life in Duxbury.

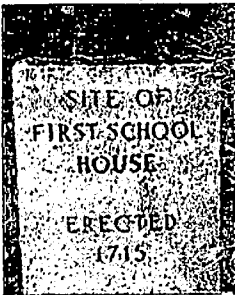
William Facey worked a total of 45 years for the French Atlantic Cable, which later became the Anglo-American Telegraph. He worked his way up from telegrapher to manager, spending his last nine years as manager of the Western Union, who leased the transatlantic cables. William Facey died in 1955 at the age of ninety-one. His wife Mabel passed away the following year.

Try as I might to find a photograph of William Facey for this article, pouring through old photographs, files, and making phone calls, I found only the truth about photographers: they are always looking through the camera lens, never at it. The Facey collection though lacking in a self-portrait remains a tribute to the town he loved dearly. Without William Facey's fascination in photography, we would be left simply with oral histories, some written documents, and isolated photographs. Today, through Facey's lenses we can travel back in time and see Surplus Street in a whole new light.

planks cleaned, reusing them to build the addition.

When Ebenezer Wormald purchased this land from Nathaniel Chandler in 1736, he built a simple and small dwelling, which today is the front section of the house. He was already married to Elizabeth Briggs and had three children, Kezia born in 1718, Betty born in 1720 and Abiah in 1725. "The house is what is known as a 'plank' house constructed of vertically placed rough sawed pine boards; shingles on the outside and plaster within," noted William Nash in 1971.

Ebenezer was a farmer, like most living in Duxbury in the early 1700s. This expansive land must have provided plenty of space for his cattle to graze. The date of the large barn located in the rear of property - larger than the dwelling house - is unknown, but its structure is very old and is recorded in deeds as early as 1796. The privy, or outhouse as we call it today, is located inside the barn with a door facing the rear of



The granite monument marks the location of the first schoolhouse, which was built along Tremont St. and later moved and attached to the Ebenezer Wormald House.

Photo by Deborah Rubin Katz

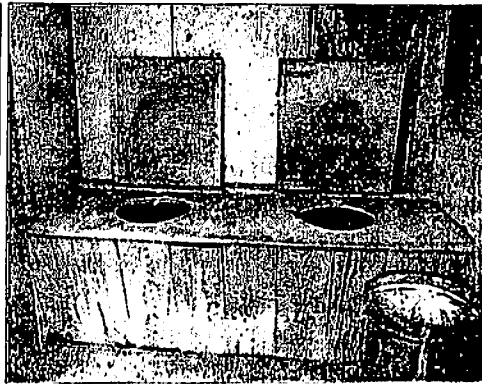
the house. It is a "two seater" which was common in houses with many family members. A poem by James Whitcomb Riley hangs in the privy, placed there by Bill Nash as a testament of his humor. (See photos)

"I remember the barn was full of old furniture when my mother and father-in-law lived there in the 1920s," recalled Marianne Hanigan in a recent interview with the *Clipper*. Marianne, now 97 years old, married William Hanigan in 1929. He was the only child of Thearessa and Thomas Hanigan who had purchased the Ebenezer Wormald house, barn and 9 3/4 acres for \$800 in 1919 from James E. Cashman. Thomas Hanigan worked for the Old Colony Railroad as a ticket collector, recalled Marianne Hanigan. "Thearessa and Thomas were lovely people, and so gracious," she added.

Their son William was a bright young man, graduating from Partridge Academy in

continued on next page

Part X: In the End



The "two-seater" privy of the Ebenezer Wormald House is located in the barn.

Photo by Shelly Rubin

Duxbury. He became a teacher in Boston, and met his future wife, Marianne, at a baseball game at Train Field in Duxbury where he was playing one evening.

Marianne often visited the Ebenezer Wormald house with her husband and children, staying over sometimes in the small bedroom on the western side of the original part of the house.

The Hanigan's loved the

property. Thearessa Hanigan was known as a "terrific house-keeper" who always made you wipe your feet before entering the house," noted Marianne Hanigan.

A large brick well located close to the northeast-end of the house, just outside the kitchen window, still functions today and provides water for the lawn. "We use to store the butter in the big well, and would

The Passing of the Backhouse

By James Whitcomb Riley (1849 - 1916)

When memory keeps me company and moves to smiles or tears,
A weather-beaten object looms through the mist of years.
Behind the house and barn it stood, a half a mile or more,
And hurrying feet a path had made, straight to its swinging door.
Its architecture was a type of simple classic art
But in the tragedy of life it played a leading part:
And oft the passing traveler drove slow and heaved a sigh
To see the modest hired girl slip out with glances shy.

We had our posy garden that the women loved so well,
I loved it too, but better still I loved the stronger smell
That filled the evening breezes so full of homely cheer
And told the night-o'-ertaken tramp that human life was near.
On lazy August afternoons, it made a better bower
Delightful, when grandfather sat and while away an hour,
For there the summer morning its every charm entwined,
And the berry bushes reddened in the leeming soil behind.

All day fat spiders spun their webs to catch the buzzing flies,
That flitted to and from the house where ma was baking pies.
And once a swarm of hornets bold, had built a palace there
And stung my unsuspecting aunt — I must not tell you where.
Then father took a flaming pole — that was a happy day,
He nearly burned the building up, but the hornets left to stay
When summer bloom began to fade and winter carouse
We banked the little building up with a heap of hemlock boughs.

But when the crust was on the snow and the sullen skies were gray,
In winter the building was no place where we could wish to stay.
We did our duties promptly, there one purpose swayed our mind,
We tarried not, nor lingered long on what we left behind,
The torture of the icy seat could make a Spartan sob
For needs must scrape the goose-flesh with a lacerating cob,
That from a frost incrustated nail, was suspended by a string,
My father was a frugal man and wasted not a thing.

When grandpa had to go out back and make his morning call,
We'd bundle up the dear old man with a muffler and a shawl
I know the hole on which he sat — 'twas padded all around,
And once I dared to sit there — 'twas all too wide I found
My loins were all too little and I jack-knifed there to stay;
They had to come and get me out, or I'd passed away.
Then father said ambition was a thing that boys should shun
And I must use the children's hole 'till childhood days were done.

But still I marvel at the craft that cut those holes so true,
The baby hole and the slender hole that fitted sister Sue,
That dear old country land-mark, I've tramped around a bit,
And in the lap of luxury my lot has been to sit,
But ere I die I'll eat the fruit of trees I robbed of youth,
Then seek the shanty where my name is carved upon the door,
I ween the old familiar smell will soothe my haled soul,
I'm now a man but none the less I'll try the children's hole.



The Ebenezer Wormal Barn, door in view leads to the privy.

Photo By Shelly Babin

In the End

continued from previous page

hoist the pail up and down when we needed the butter," recalled Hanigan. Those who grew up on Surplus Street also remember this well, as they would often stop on their way to school for a drink from Aunt Nabby's well.

Aunt Nabby was Abigail Sampson Brewster. She was the daughter of Isaac and Abigail Sampson, and was born in the house in 1801. The purchase of the house by Isaac Sampson in 1796 was the beginning of a 103-year ownership in the property by the Sampson-Brewster family. Isaac Sampson had purchased the Ebenezer Wormal house for \$46 dollars in 1796 from Lat Hunt, a mariner who had married Mary Samson in 1750. Lot and Mary Hunt had raised six children in the house after purchasing it in 1778 from Consider Thomas, a blacksmith.

During the Revolutionary War, Lat Hunt commanded the schooner *Olive*, owned by Captain Nathaniel Winsor, with Thomas Sampson and William Winsor. The British forty-gun ship, *Chatham*, seized the *Olive* but later released the Duxbury crew, "with the loss of their mainsail, which the enemy retained," noted Justin Winsor.

Prior to Lot Hunt's ownership in the property, a cordwainer (cobbler) named John Prior lived in the house from 1772 to 1778. John Prior

had purchased the property for 2 shillings from George Ussel who worked as a blacksmith. Ussel bought the 8 acres of land with "buildings, fencing and orchards thereon" from Thomas Prince, acting as administrator for Ebenezer Wormal's estate, back in 1748. Ussel with his wife Mary had one daughter, Molly, before they moved into the house. Unfortunately, Molly died of consumption at the age of 18 years, and the following year in 1757 her mother Mary passed away at the age of forty. George remarried within the year to Mercy Osyer who came to live in the Ebenezer Wormal house.

From farmer, to blacksmith, to shoemaker, to mariners, and then to a railroad worker, this house is a wonderful example of all the enterprises which sustained those who lived on Surplus Street.

In the end...

Surplus Street boasts some of the town's most beautifully maintained historical homes, barns, fences and other outbuildings. This is largely due to its residents, both past and present, who, like Marion and Bill Nash, recognize the importance of preservation and cherish this road which once led to the Meetinghouse and salt marshes. In the beginning, it was just a well worn Native American trail, then a dirt cart path, later a gravelled road, and today a paved street; but in the end, it is really an historical journey down one of Duxbury's oldest pathways.

NOTE:

"I would like to thank all the individuals who assisted in this one-year project. The names of those who provided oral histories, photographs, maps, deeds and genealogy research, along with encouraging words, has become too long to print, but you know who you are and how much your help meant to me. Thanks to the organizations that provided photos and data, such as the Library & Archives Committee of the DR&HS, the Town Clerk's office, and the Duxbury and Plymouth Cemetery offices. A special thanks goes to all the Clipper readers who called or wrote me during this series on Surplus Street. Your enthusiasm for history, and kind words are what this writer lives on; so please keep in touch!"

Debora Babin Katz

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